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of waiting for us and had moved out packs and all.. We hastily shouldered our implements.

"Don't you want to keep this claim next me?" inquired our acquaintance. We stopped

"Surely!" I replied. "But how do we do it? "Just leave your pick and shovel in

"Won't some one steal them?" "No.

"What's to prevent?" I asked a little skeptically.

"Miner's law." he replied. We almost immediately got trace of our strayed animais, as a number of men had seen them going upstream. In fact, we had no difficulty whatever in finding them, for they had simply followed up the rough stream bed between the canyon walls until it had opened up to a gentler slope and a hanging garden of grass and flowers. Here they had turned aside and were feeding. We caught them and were just hending them back when Yank

"What's the matter with this here?" he inquired. "Here's feed and water near, and it ain't so very far back to the diggings."

We looked about us for the first time with seeing eyes. The little up sloping meadow was blue and dull red with flowers, below us the stream brawled foam flecked among black rocks, the high bills rose up to meet the sky, and at our backs across the way the pines stood thick serried: Far up in the blue heavens some birds were circling slowly. Somehow the leisurely swing of these unhasting birds struck from us the feverish hurry that had lately filled our souls. We drew deep breaths, and for the first time the great peace and majesty of these California mountains cooled our spirits. "I think it's a bully place, Yank," said Johnny soberly, "and that little

bench up above us looks flat." We clambered across the slant of the flower spangled meadow to the bench, just within the fringe of the pines. It proved to be flat, and from the edge of it down the hill seeped a little spring marked by the feathery bracken. We entered a cool green place, peopled notes of soft voiced birds. Just over our threshold, as it were, was the sunlit, chirpy, buzzing, bright colored busy Overhead a wind of many world. voices hummed through the pine tops. The golden sunlight flooded the mountains opposite, flashed from the stream, lay languorous on the meadow. Long bars of it slanted through an unguess ed gap in the hills behind us to touch with magic the very tops of the trees over our heads. The sheen of the preclous metal was over the land.

CHAPTER XIII.

The First Gold. PE arose before daylight, picketed our horses, left our dishes unwashed and hurried down to the diggings just at sunup, carrying our gold pans, or "washbowls," and our extra tools. The bar was as yet deserted. We set to work with a will, taking turns with the pickax and the two shovels. I must confess that our speed slowed down considerably after the first wild burst, but we kept at it steadily. It was hard work, and there is no denying it, just the sort of plain hard work the day laborer does when he digs sewer trenches in the city streets only worse, perhaps, owing to the nature of the soil. It had struck me since that those few years of hard labor in the diggings, from 149 to '53 or '54, saw more actual manual toil accomplished than was ever before performed in the same time by the same number of men. The discouragement of those returning we now understood. They had expected to take the gold without toll and were dismayed at the labor it had required. At any rate, we thought we were doing our share that morning, especially after the sun came up. We wielded our implements manfully, piled our debris to one side and gradually achieved a sort of crumbling uncertain excavation reluctant to stay emptied.

About an hour after our arrival the other miners began to appear, smoking their pipes. They stretched themselves lazily, spat upon their bands and set to. Our friend of the day before nodded at us cheerfully and hopped down into his hole.

We removed what seemed to us tons of rock. About noon, just as we were thinking rather dispiritedly of knocking off work for a lunch, which in our early morning eagerness we had forgotten to bring, Johnny turned up a shovelful whose lower third consisted of the pulverized bluish clay. We promptly forgot both lunch and our

own weariness. "Hey!" shouted our friend, scram bling from his own claim. "Easy with the rocks! What are you conducting here, a volcano?" He peered down at us. "Pay dirt, hev? Well, take it

ensy. It won't run away." Take it easy! As well ask us to quit entirely! We tore at the rubble, which aggravatingly and obstinately cascaded down upon us from the sides. We peraped eagerly for more of that blue

Surely enough, our animals had tired clay. At last we had filled our three pans with a rather mixed lot of the dirt and raced to the river. Johnny fell over a bowlder and scattered his panful far and wide. His manner of scuttling back to the hole after more reminded me irresistibly of the way a contestant in a candle race hurries back to the starting point to get his

> candle relighted. We panned that dirt clumsily and bastily enough and undoubtedly lost much valuable sand overside, but we ended each with a string of color. We crowded together, comparing our pans. Then we went crazy. I suppose we had about a quarter of a dollar's worth of gold between us, but that was not the point. The long journey with all its bardships and adventures, the toil, the uncertainty, the hopes, the disappointments and react s had at last their visible tangible sciusion. The tiny flecks of gold were a symbol. We yapped aloud, we kicked up our heels, we shook hands, we finally joined hands and danced around and around. We worked with entire absorption,

> quite oblivious to all that was going on about us. It was only by accident that Yank looked up at last, so I do not know how long Don Gaspar had "Will you look at that?" cried Yank. Don Gaspar, still in his embroidered boots, his crimson velvet breeches, his white linen and his sombrero, but

without the blue and silver jacket, was

busily wielding a pickax a hundred

feet or so away. His companion, or

servant, was doing the heavier shovel "Why, oh, why," breathed Johnny at last, "do you suppose, if he must mine, he doesn't buy himself a suit of dungarees or a flannel shirt?"

"I'll bet it's the first hard work be ever did in his life," surmised Yank. "And I'll bet he won't do that very

long," I guessed. But Don Gaspar seemed to have more sticking power than we gave him credit for. We did not pay him much further attention, for we were busy with our own affairs, but every time we glanced in his direction he appeared to be still at it. Our sack of sand was growing heavier, as, indeed, were entered a cool green place, peopled our limbs. As a matter of fact we ing was at first the natural one of the with shadows and the rare, considered had been at harder work than any of gold diggings. Don Gaspar and his us had been accustomed to for very



"Well, it wasn't your turn yesterday." he pointed out.

long hours, beneath a scorching sun, without food and under strong excite ment. We did not know when to quit, but the sun at last decided it for us by dipping below the mountains to the

west. The following days were replicas of the first. We ate hurriedly at odd times; we worked feverishly; we sank into our tumbled blankets at night too tired to wiggle. But the buckskin sack of gold was swelling and rounding out most satisfactorily. By the end of the week it contained over a pound!

But the long hours, the excitement and the inadequate food told on our nerves. We snapped at each other impatiently at times and once or twice came near to open quarreling. Johnny and I were constantly pecking at each other over the most trivial concerns.

One morning we were halfway to the bar when we remembered that we had neglected to picket out the horses. It was necessary for one of us to go back, and we were all reluctant to do so.

up that hill," I growled to myself. tied them up yesterday, anyway." Johnny caught this.

"Well, it wasn't your turn yesterday." he pointed out, "and it is today. I've got nothing to do with what you chose to do yesterday."

"Or any other day," I muttered. "What's that?" cried Johnny truculently. "I couldn't hear. Speak up!" We were flushed and eying each oth-

er malevolently. "That'll do!" said Yank, with an unexpected tone of authority. "Nobody will go back and nobody will go ahead. We'll just sit down on this log yere while we smoke one pipe apiece. I've

Johnny and I turned on him with a certain belligerency mingled with surprise. Yank had so habitually acted the part of taciturnity that his decided air of authority confused us. His slouch had straightened; his head was up; his mild eye sparkled. Suddenly I felt like a bad small boy, and I believe Johnny was the same. After a moment's hesitation we sat down on the

"Now," said Yank firmly, "it's about time we took stock. We been here now five days. We ain't had a decent meal of vittles in that time. We ain't fixed up our camp a mite. We ain't been to town to see the sights. We don't even know the looks of the man that's camped down below us. We've been too danged busy to be decent. Now we're goin' to call a halt. I should jedge we have a pound of gold or tharabouts. How much is that

worth, Johnny? You can figger in yore

"Along about \$250," said Johnny after a moment. "Well, keep on figgerin'. How much does that come to apiece?"

"About \$80, of course." "And dividin' eighty by five?" peristed Yank.

"Well." drawled Yank, his steely blue eye softening to a twinkle, "\$16 a day is fair wages, to be sure, but nothin' to get wildly excited over." He surveyed the two of us with some humor. "Hadn't thought of it that way, had you?" he asked. "Nuther had I until last night. I was so dog tired I couldn't sleep, and I got to figgerin' a little on my own hook."

"Why, I can do better than that in San Francisco, with half the work!" I

"Maybe for awhile," said Yank, "but here we got a chance to make a big strike most any time and in the meantime to make good wages. But we ain't goin' to do it any quicker by killin' ourselves. Now, today is Sunday. ain't no religious man, but Sunday is a good day to quit. I propose we go back to camp peaceable, make a decent place to stay, cook ourselves up a squar' meal, wash out our clothes, visit the next camp, take a look at town and enjoy ourselves."

Thus vanished the first and most wonderful romance of the gold. Reduced to wages it was somehow no onger so marvelous. The element of uncertainty was always there, to be sure, and an inexplicable fascination, but no longer had we any desire to dig up the whole place immediately. I suppose we moved nearly as much earth, but the fibers of our minds were relaxed, and we did it more easily and

with less nervous wear and tear. Also, as Yank suggested, we took pains to search out our fellow beings. The camper below us proved to be Don Gaspar, velvet breeches and all. He received us hospitably and proffered perfumed cigarettos, which we did not like, but which we smoked out of politeness. Our common ground of meeting was at first the natural one of the man, whom he called Vasquez, had produced somewhat less flake gold than ourselves, but exhibited a half ounce nugget and several smaller lumps. We could not make him out Neither his appearance nor his personal equipment suggested necessity and yet he labored as hard as the rest of us. His gaudy costume was splashed and grimy with the red mud. al though evidently he had made some attempt to brush it. The linen was, of course, hopeless. He showed us the blisters on his small aristocratic looking hands.

"It is the hard work." he stated simply, "but one gets the gold." From that subject we passed on to horses. He confessed that he was uneasy as to the safety of his own magnificent animals and succeeded in

alarming us as to our own. "Thos' Indian," he told us, "are always out to essteal, and the paisanos. It has been tole me that Andreas Amijo and his robbers are near. Some day

we lose our horse!" Our anxiety at this time was given an edge by the fact that the horses, having fed well and becoming tired of the same place, were inclined to stray. It was impossible to keep them always on picket lines-the nature of the meadow would not permit it-and they soon learned to be very clever with their hobbles. Several mornings we put in an hour or so hunting them up and bringing them in before we could start work for the day. This wasted both time and temper. The result was that we drifted into partnership with Don Gaspar and Vasquez. I do not remember who proposed the arrangement. Indeed, I am inclined to think it just came about naturally from our many discussions of the subject. Under the terms of it we appointed Vasquez to cook all the meals, take full care of the horses, chop the wood, draw the water and keep camp generally. The rest of us worked in couples at the bar. We divided the gold into five equal parts.

CHAPTER XIV. At Hangman's Gulch. UR visit to the town we postponed from day to day because we were either too busy or too tired. We thought we could about figure out what that crude sort of village would be like. Then on Saturday evening our neighbor with the twinkling eye-whom we called McNally without conviction because he told us to-informed us that there would be a miners' meeting next day and that we would be expected to at-

(To Be Continued.) The Taylor Wharton Iron & Steel Co., of High Bridge, N. Y., increased its capital from \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,-

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